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ABSTRACT

Because testing comprehension of long (5- to 10-page) second-language texts is more complex than testing shorter texts, an alternative form of second language reading comprehension test is needed. In a guided summary completion test, students are presented with a greatly shortened version of the text (e.g., one-paragraph summary), containing several blank spaces representing key words or sentences. Each blank stands for a macro-level concept or structure in the text; no blank taps information on the micro-level (i.e., detail, example, or other support for a macro-level idea). Possible test formats include having students fill in words, from a single word to a sentence, or listing separately words and/or sentences from which students can fill in blanks. The guided summary completion test is used at Haifa University (Israel) in the final examination for English second-language reading comprehension courses. The exam includes a 6- to 10-page text and a variety of item types: open-ended questions of general comprehension, true/false questions, and multiple-choice items. Students' performance on this portion of the examination has been found to correlate moderately with test scores on the rest of the exam, supporting the idea that the guided summary completion test is a test of global reading comprehension. The appendix provides two texts with guided summary completion texts. (Contains 30 references.) (MSE)

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ED 363 094

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A GUIDED SUMMARY COMPLETION TEST FOR LONG ACADEMIC TEXTS

ABSTRACT

Testing comprehension of long texts (5-10 pages) is more complicated than testing shorter (1-2 page) texts. Since one purpose of giving a long text on an exam is to test macro-level skills, the summary is an appropriate type of test question. The grading of summaries, however, is problematic (with several acceptable answers) and often subjective.

A more objective kind of summary is suggested here. In the guided summary completion test, students are presented with a greatly shortened version of the text (eg, a 1-paragraph summary of a 6-page text) containing several blank spaces. Blanks are placed instead of key words or sentences. Each blank would stand for a macro-level concept or structure in the text. No blank would tap information on the micro-level (ie, detail, example, or other support for macro-level idea). One possible test format is to have students fill in any number of words, from one word to a sentence. Another possibility is to list, separately, words and/or sentences from which students can fill in the blanks. (The number of phrases and sentences would be at least twice the number of blank spaces.)

For the past three years, we have been using the guided summary completion as the last section of the final exam for the reading comprehension courses. The exam includes a long 6-10 page text and a variety of question types: open-end questions of general comprehension, true/false, and multiple-choice. Students' performance on this portion of the exam was found to correlate moderately with test scores on the rest of the exam. The guided summary completion is a test of global reading comprehension.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Students are constantly reading, summarizing and reorganizing information when preparing for tests, taking notes, or writing papers. In Israel, however, although they write in Hebrew, much of their academic reading material is likely to be in English. Evaluating a reader's comprehension on the whole-text or macro-level is different from testing comprehension on the word or sentence (micro-) level. It entails ascertaining comprehension of ideas and logical relations between sentences, among paragraphs, and in the text as a whole.

If a text is not written in the reader's native language, then the factor of language proficiency must also be considered. The language proficiency of nan-native readers of English may not be adequate, so that they may not notice clues given by cohesive markers and sentence structure (Sim 1979, Baten 1981). Furthermore, they may not be sensitive enough to semantic, stylistic, and cultural nuances (Baten 1981). For both these reasons students of EFL find it more difficult than native English-speakers to follow the writer's intention in a text.

Testing reading comprehension should ideally involve authentic tasks such as summarizing, outlining, and asking/answering questions. These tasks, however, also involve writing, which is not to be graded as part of the reading process. In evaluating reading comprehension,

writing can be kept to a minimum or done in the native language. in order not to penalize students for writing mistakes. For this reason, grading a summary is problematic. The Guided Summary Completion attempts to solve this problem by combining summarizing and general comprehension skills with the minimal writing format of the gap-filling exercise.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the conditions in which a Guided Summary Completion would be useful as part of a larger test battery.

II. READING COMPREHENSION

Reading is a complex process simultaneously proceeding on two levels. Readers are constantly abstracting meaning from texts and deriving macro-structures, or meaning on the global level, from micro-structures, or propositions on the local level (van Dijk, 1977 and 1980; Kintsch and van Dijk, 1978). Comprehension is seen as the interaction between top-down processing from activated schemata and bottom-up processing from concepts expressed by the sentence (Auble and Franks, 1983; Adams, 1980; Spiro, 1980).

Texts possess coherence, which has been defined as "the organization and unity of ideas in context" (Canale, 1982). Coherence is said to rest on a recurrence of semantic components (Beaugrande, 1980). This involves redundancy on both macro- and micro-levels.

Van Dijk (1980) enumerates the conditions by which sentences or propositions are connected or cohere. These conditions include: cause/reason, result/consequence, explanation, introduction, relations such as general-particular and whole-part, knowledge of the world (i.e., the ability to infer meanings from the text). More specifically, van Dijk explains that in a coherent text, certain speech acts are homogeneous, or 'belong together.' These relations can occur within a sentence (micro-level) or across sentences and paragraphs (macro-level).

On the macro-level, the organization of texts of different genres has been analyzed in terms of moves (Swales and Najjar 1987, Hopkins and Dudley-Evans 1988). This kind of discourse analysis provides a system which takes into account the content of a text, its internal linguistic organization, and the ways in which the writer addresses the readers/audience.

III. METHODS OF EVALUATING READING COMPREHENSION

A. Summarizing

Summarizing entails activating text schemata and perceiving coherence, distinguishing between main and subordinate ideas, drawing inferences, and making judgements. It is a whole-text, super-macro-level skill that must be learned. Recent research has emphasized the importance of summarizing as an aid to reading comprehension (Bensoussan and Kreindler 1990, Cohen 1987, Bernhardt 1986, Brown et al. 1981). Summarizing appears to be an activity well suited to sensitizing advanced foreign language readers to the inner workings of a text and weaning them away from word-by-word decoding.

B. Cloze Procedures on the Discourse Level

The Cloze test is supposed to measure text difficulty. However, researchers have shown that it neither samples a text in a truly random fashion nor yields a score that would be reliable for any given text. Depending on the placement of blanks, different kinds of cloze tests can be obtained from the same text. Having rejected the random cloze for not being an automatically valid testing procedure, then, a number of researchers suggested rational deletion methods according to linguistic principles (Weaver 1962, Greene 1965, Alderson 1969, Cranney 1972-73, Klein-Braley 1981, Bensoussan and Ramraz 1984).

The rational cloze procedure can be used as a measure of text difficulty. Blanks can be put in place of content words, function words, parts of speech, markers of cohesion;

these words can be used to test comprehension on the micro-level or the macro-level. Even the rational cloze does not necessarily test the student's grasp of the content or ideas in the text, however.

A multiple-choice modification of the rational cloze procedure was designed by Bensoussan and Ramraz (1984). The basic advantage of this method over the multiple-choice test is that the correct answer does not reflect the tester's interpretation of the text, but is an integral part of the text. The basic advantage over standard cloze procedure is that the focus is on recognition, not production. That is, the focus is on reading uncontaminated by the element of writing.

There have been several other efforts to tap comprehension on the discourse level by means of a modified rational cloze procedure. The Discourse Cloze (Levenston, Nir, and Blum-Kulka 1984) deletes only overt cohesion markers of co-reference and connectives between propositions. The researchers assumed that the correct completion of macro-level items deleted from a text indicates understanding of the whole discourse, and not merely of the context immediately surrounding the blank spaces.

The Semantic Cloze (Mauranen 1988) has been used to test comprehension of advanced, academic texts. It aims to delete more macro-level than micro-level words, deleting content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) and discourse

markers, also including alternative responses for each deletion. It has the advantage over a standard cloze of potentially avoiding the micro-level bias. Mauranen also gives evidence suggesting that the test is sensitive to changes in students' reading comprehension skills.

The SeDelGap Test (Selected Deletion Gap-Filling Test) (Bensoussan and Mauranen 1989) measures reading comprehension of a text on the macro-level, testing both the reader's familiarity with cohesive links and grasp of text coherence. Thus it combines qualities of both the discourse cloze (Levenston et al. 1984) and the semantic cloze (Mauranen 1988). Discourse analysis is used to select deletions and to examine their relations to macro-structures in the text.

C. GUIDED SUMMARY COMPLETION TEST

1. Rationale: How to test long texts?

A number of test question formats already exist to tap micro-level comprehension: open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, and various gap filling exercises mentioned above. Although each of these can be constructed to test macro-level comprehension as well, the probability of finding items that test comprehension of more than a single sentence is not high. Even open-ended questions, which have the greatest potential for probing macro-level comprehension, are usually linked

to sentence level comprehension. In fact, macro-level items are rare in any test of reading comprehension.

Question types that yield such macro-level knowledge include flow-charts, tables, and summaries (Cohen 1987, Bensoussan and Kreindler 1990). The Guided Summary Completion is another exercise focussing on macro-level reading.

Because of the difficulty of obtaining reliability in scoring summaries, the summary task was combined with the gap-filling format, thus aiding students in formulating the summary with key elements (words or phrases) missing. The Guided Summary Completion test presents a shortened version of a long, academic text, paraphrased so that no part actually repeats the syntax of the original text.

Advantages include the fact that as a test of macro-level comprehension, it encourages students to look at the text as a whole, weaning them from word-by-word decoding. The washback effect on reading comprehension is welcomed by teachers and students alike.

Another advantage is that students do not need to do much writing in filling in the blanks. Thus, they are in little danger of being penalized for poor writing skills. It focuses on recognition, not production.

The test is flexible. Although we use it to test macro-level comprehension, it may also be used for micro-level comprehension or a mixture of both. In addition, test constructors may design the key according to whether ease of grading or freedom of expression are of paramount importance. The Guided Summary Completion is fairly rapid to construct and grade.

Based on summary writing, the task of Guided Summary Completion is an authentic type of test, dealing with the text itself without adding irrelevant distractors. It emerges organically from the text itself.

Disadvantages include teacher bias in constructing and grading the test. Texts may be open to interpretation in terms of level of detail included in the summary completion task. Different teachers may have different ideas about the structure of a given text. Since several possible answers may be correct, grading may be complicated.

The test may have low reliability since few items are yielded and reliability increases with the number of questions. Although the Guided Summary Completion is short, each blank space represents several layers of meaning. Each blank, therefore, stands for many smaller items of information. It is uneconomical because of the few items yielded. As part of a general test battery with other question types, however, this disadvantage can be turned to advantage.

As a test of macro-level comprehension, the Guided Summary Completion should be part of a larger test battery rather than given on its own. These questions should be weighted more heavily than the other question types. As a test of micro-level comprehension, however, its reliability would probably be similar to any other item type. Further research is needed to explore the various possibilities of this item type.

2. Previous Research on Guided Summary Completion

Recent research has focussed on guided summaries. CITO (The National Testing Service of the Netherlands) has been experimenting with them (van Krieken 1993 and Sprengers 1993).

Courchene and Ready from the University of Ottawa (1991) have been working with what they term the Summary Cloze for adult students in China. The original texts for these summary completion tasks are themselves relatively short, not exceeding 200 words. Another attempt along the same lines was made by Bensoussan (1983). Examinees need to replace blanks by choosing from a list of phrases or sentences.

The Guided Summary Completion was first used by Pollitt as part of the reading section of The English Language Skills Profile (TELS) for children (Hutchinson and Pollitt 1988). This test consists of a re-written summary of the original

text in which the original syntax has been reformulated. Where there are clearly marked discourse markers, blanks are placed instead of phrases. Examinees are to choose from a list of phrases and/or sentences and match the appropriate phrase to each blank. Again, blanks focus on comprehension of the whole text.

A Guided Summary Completion test for adults has been included in the International English Language Testing Syndicate (IELTS) jointly produced by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations (UCLES) and the British Council. Each test version of 3-4 texts takes 55 minutes. Only one question format, however, appears for each text, so that the Guided Summary Completion task is used for only one text. Either the matching or fill-in version is used. This test format is described by Pollitt (1993).

At Haifa University, we have been working on much longer academic texts of 2-20 pages. Although our examinations contain general comprehension questions, multiple-choice and true/false items, reference questions, and tables, the reader's comprehension of the text as a whole is not always evident. We are concerned that students may read sentences and paragraphs without being able to comprehend on the macro-level, especially in texts of 10 pages or more. It is not always possible to formulate such broad questions without demanding considerable writing skills on the part of the students -- which is undesirable in a test of reading comprehension. For our purposes, micro-level questions

alone are inadequate. We are interested in supplementing the traditional test format with a wholly macro-level subtest.

3. Procedures for Guided Summary Completion Test

a. Have several teachers/test writers write parallel summaries of a text including only macro-level ideas. Exclude details and examples; include superordinates and general words. Compare summaries to arrive at the "best" one.

The summary need not imitate the structure of the original text. The closer it does, however, the easier it will be.

The summary may be very general or may include certain levels of detail, depending on the purpose of the test designer. If different types of questions are asked on the same text, care should be taken to make sure they do not overlap and thus confuse the students.

b. Choose blanks according to the following criteria:

1) A blank represents a macro-level idea or bit of information or logical relation in the original text.

2) The number of blanks can vary according to the level of detail required by the summary.

3) A blank can stand for one or more words -- up to a clause.

4) Students should not be able to guess the word(s) from the context of the summary. They should not be able to fill in the summary completion without having read the original text.

Unlike the cloze procedure which assumes redundancy within the text, the Guided Summary Completion exercise gives as few clues as possible. All information should be drawn from the original text.

5) The summary should not contain any clues about other parts of the test.

Although the summary task extends over an entire text, the number of test items is few. It would not be unusual for a Guided Summary Completion task to yield only 3 - 10 items out of a total of 50 items on a 3-hour test covering a 10-page text. Each item is on the macro-, super-macro-, or whole text level, and not many such items can be produced for a text. The number of items may vary according to level of detail included. Second, many general questions may

have already been asked in other parts of the exam, and overlapping must be avoided so as not to confuse students. Finally, the shorter the original text, the shorter its summary.

c. Responses may be graded in several ways:

1) Full marks given for correct choice from list of possible answers.

2) Full marks given for exact words from script.

3) Full marks given for a specific answer as listed in answer key

since it is not possible to quote directly from the text.

Partial marks for other answers.

4) Full marks given for any intelligent answer according to the text.

4. Experimental Reading Comprehension Tests

Students at Haifa University are required to read long academic articles of about 20 pages in English. Most are native speakers of Hebrew, about 20% are native speakers of Arabic, and there are native speakers of other languages such as Russian, English, French, Spanish, Amharic, etc. Although Hebrew is usually the medium of instruction, most of the bibliographical materials in the textbooks and journals are written in English. Since not all students are able to read long English texts when ntering university, a series of reading comprehension courses are offered to those who have not merited exemption (more than 90% of the students) to help them improve their reading skills. The top level course includes 50 hours during a 14-week semester. The final three-hour examination at the end of this course consists of a long article with a series of item types including open-ended comprehension, true/false, multiple-choice, and tables.

Two lower level courses are offered, so that entering students may study from one to three semesters, depending on proficiency. Their final exam includes a text and questions, although shorter and less difficult than the top level course, and additional selected materials from course work. Thus the weighting of the long text on the exam is reduced at the lower levels.

At the end of the first semester in 1991, the Guided Summary Completion was added to the final examinations at each of the three levels. Test sessions were given in January, February, and March. The weighting of the text section varied from 85% in the top level test to 40% in the lowest level test. The weighting of the summary completion section varied between 15%-21% in the top level test (depending on the version) to 10% in the lower levels.

Table 1 contains means and standard deviations for 626 students in 21 classes. These were teacher-made classroom tests, not previously pretested. The Guided Summary Completion appears to be more difficult than the other items on the same text. There were differences across levels, versions, and teachers, however.

TABLE 1: MEANS and STANDARD DEVIATIONS

	Guid Sum Comp	TEXT	TOTAL
RANGE	0 - 21	0 - 87	0 - 100
MEAN	7.04	40.51	66.03
Standard Deviation	4.19	16.18	17.56

Total scores were significantly different across the three levels ($F(2,623)=15.2$, $p=.0001$). Results were compared across levels, versions, and teachers for guided summary scores, text scores, and total scores. MANOVA showed

significant differences for all, although some interactive effects may have counteracted each other (see Table 2).

TABLE 2: COMPARISONS ACROSS SCORES

VARIABLE		SUMMARY COMPL		TEXT		TOTAL	
	(df)	F	p	F	p	F	p
LEVEL	2,602	6.23	.0021	15.52	.0001	.84	ns
VERSION	2,602	8.59	.0002	10.07	.0001	10.25	.0001
LEVEL*VERSION	3,602	3.04	.0284	11.45	.0001	5.10	.0017
TEACHER	8,602	2.43	.0138	4.20	.0001	3.60	.0004
LEVEL*TEACHER	3,602	1.41	ns	2.45	ns	2.47	.0316

Pearson correlations were calculated between the scores from the Guided Summary Completion task, on the one hand, and scores for the other test items on the same text, as well as the total score, on the other hand. Correlations among the total scores, scores for the text, and for the summary completion were moderately high and generally significant (see Table 3).

TABLE 3: PEARSON CORRELATIONS BETWEEN GUIDED SUMMARY COMPLETION AND TEXT SCORES ACROSS TEST VERSIONS

LEVEL	VERSION	N	TEXT SCORE	p	TOTAL SCORE	p
1	1	132	.43	.0001	.63	.0001
	2	19	.20	ns	.53	.0178
	3	4	.96	.035	.99	.0122
2	1	231	.54	.0001	.67	.0001
	2	80	.35	.0013	.43	.0001
	3	41	.37	ns	.54	ns
3	1	116	.48	.0001	.64	.0001
	2	36	.41	.0136	.63	.0001

For most of versions, Pearson correlations between the guided summary completion and other scores were significant though moderate. Overall, across all the tests, the Pearson correlations are significant (r(text)=.569, p=.0001; r(total)=.564, p=.0001). Assuming that the Guided Summary Completion task taps a skill not tested in other parts of the test, one is not surprised at the moderate correlations between this subtest and other parts of the test. Indeed, high correlations would indicate that it was redundant.

Reliability was not calculated because these tests were not originally designed for research but were actual teacher-made tests with an added Guided Summary Completion component. Our impression was that the scores on this section were more difficult than on the others, but that variation among tests and versions was too great to yield meaningful reliability scores.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Guided Summary Completion is a flexible test format. It can vary in length and level of detail according to the wishes of the test designer. It can be the only task used to test a given text or one of several. Blanks can be in place of single words or longer phrases. They can be filled in by the student or chosen from a list of possible words and phrases.

Students see the Guided Summary Completion section as an authentic task and a test of global reading comprehension. Teachers like it for its washback effect in class. It makes students think not only about separate segments of a text, but also about the structure and meaning of the whole. The whole is indeed more than the sum of its parts.

Markers need to be trained in grading the longer answers. It should be noted that teacher bias in grading may be no more problematic than on other parts of the test. More research needs to be done in the training of raters in general. As a test of global comprehension, then, the Guided Summary Completion shows promising potential. It extends the structure of the cloze format to new macro-level possibilities.

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APPENDIX -- 2 texts and Guided Summary Completion Tasks

WHAT IS POVERTY?

In the nineteenth century, conservatives in England used to argue against reform on the grounds that the British worker of the time had a longer life expectancy than a medieval nobleman. This abstract approach toward poverty in which one compares different centuries or societies has very real consequences. For the nineteenth-century British conservative, it was a way of ignoring the plight of workers who were living under the most inhuman conditions. The twentieth-century conservative would be shocked and appalled in an advanced society if there were widespread conditions like those of the English cities a hundred years ago. Our standards of decency, of what truly human life requires, change, and they should.

There are two main aspects of this change. First, there are new definitions of what man can achieve, of what a human standard of life should be. In recent times this has been particularly true since technology has consistently broadened man's potential: it has made a longer, healthier, better life possible. Thus, in terms of what is technically possible, we have higher aspirations. Those who suffer levels of life well below those that are possible, even though they live better than medieval knights or Asian peasants, are poor.

This is to say that a definition of poverty is, to a considerable extent, a historically conditioned matter. Indeed if one wanted to play with figures, it would be possible to prove that there are no poor people in the United States, or at least only a few whose plight is as desperate as that of masses in Hong Kong. There is starvation in American society, but it is not a pervasive social problem as it is in some of the newly independent nations. There are still Americans who literally die in the streets, but their numbers are comparatively small.

Related to technological advance is the social definition of poverty. The American poor are not poor in Hong Kong or in the sixteenth century; they are poor here and now, in the United States. They are dispossessed in terms of what the rest of the nation enjoys, in terms of what the society could provide if it had the will. They live on the fringe, the margin. They watch the movies and read the magazines of affluent America, and these tell them that they are internal exiles. This sense of exclusion is the source of a pessimism, a defeatism that intensifies the exclusion.

To have one bowl of rice in a society where all other people have half a bowl may well be a sign of achievement and intelligence; it may spur a person to act and to fulfill his human potential. To have five bowls of rice in a society where the majority have a decent, balanced diet, is tragedy.

One of the consequences of our new technology is that we have created new needs. There are more people who live longer. Therefore they need more. In short, if there is technological advance without social advance, there is, almost automatically, an increase in human misery, in impoverishment.

from The Other America by Michael Harrington, 1962.

GUIDED SUMMARY COMPLETION

Directions: Fill in the blank spaces according to the meaning of the text.

Since the 19th century, people's standards of living have

(1) _____ . This change has resulted from

(2) _____ and (3) _____ .

According to Harrington, in order for people to be happy, they

(4) _____ .

KEY

1. risen, increased, improved
2. technological advance
3. sociological advance, broadening of man's potential, changed definition of poverty
4. need to use both advances (full credit)
   they should have as much as the rest of the nation (partial credit)

HAPPINESS

What is meant by happiness? Most people today would probably answer the question by saying that to be happy is to have "fun," or "to have a good time." The answer to the question, "What is fun?" depends somewhat on the economic situation of the individual, and more, on his education and personality structure. Economic differences, however, are not as important as they may seem. The "good time" of society's upper strata is the fun model for those not yet able to pay for it while earnestly hoping for that happy eventuality -- and the "good time" of society's lower strata is increasingly a cheaper imitation of the upper strata's, differing in cost, but not so much in quality.

What does this fun consist in? Going to the movies, parties, ball games, listening to the radio and watching television, taking a ride in the car on Sundays, making love, sleeping late on Sunday mornings, and travelling, for those who can afford it. If we use a more respectable term, instead of the words "fun" and "having a good time," we might say that the concept of happiness is, at best, identified with that of pleasure. Taking into consideration our discussion of the problem of consumption, we can define the concept somewhat more accurately as the pleasure of unrestricted consumption, push-button power and laziness.

From this standpoint, happiness could be defined as the opposite of sadness or sorrow, and indeed, the average person defines happiness as a state of mind which is free from sadness or sorrow. This definition, however, shows that there is something profoundly wrong in this concept of happiness. A person who is alive and sensitive cannot fail to be sad and feel sorrow many times in his life. This is so, not only because of the amount of unnecessary suffering produced by the imperfection of our social arrangements, but because of the nature of human existence, which makes it impossible not to react to life with a good deal of pain and sorrow. Since we are living beings, we must be sadly aware of the necessary gap between our aspirations and what can be achieved in our short and troubled life. Since death confronts us with the inevitable fact that either we shall die before our loved ones or they before us -- since we see suffering, the unavoidable as well as the unnecessary and wasteful, around us every day, how can we avoid the experience of pain and sorrow? The effort to avoid it is only possible if we reduce our sensitivity, responsiveness and love, if we harden our hearts and withdraw our attention and our feeling from others, as well as from ourselves.

If we want to define happiness by its opposite, we must define it not in contrast to sadness, but in contrast to depression.

What is depression? It is the inability to feel, it is the sense of being dead, while our body is alive. It is the

inability to experience joy, as well as the inability to experience sadness. A depressed person would be greatly relieved if he could feel sad. A state of depression is so unbearable because one is incapable of feeling anything, either joy or sadness. If we try to define happiness in contrast to depression, we approach Spinoza's definition of joy and happiness as that state of intensified vitality that fuses into one whole our effort both to understand our fellow men and be one with them. Happiness results from the experience of productive living, and the use of the powers of love and reason which unite us with the world. Happiness consists in our touching the rock bottom of reality, in the discovery of our self and our oneness with others as well as our difference from them. Happiness is a state of intense inner activity and the experience of the increasing vital energy which occurs in productive relatedness to the world and to ourselves.

It follows that happiness cannot be found in the state of inner passivity, and in the consumer attitude which pervades the life of alienated man. Happiness is to experience fullness, not emptiness which needs to be filled. The average man today may have a good deal of fun and pleasure, but in spite of this, he is fundamentally depressed. Perhaps it clarifies the issue if instead of using the word "depressed" we use the word "bored." Actually there is very little difference between the two, except a difference in degree, because boredom is nothing but the experience of a paralysis of our productive powers and the sense of unaliveness. Among the evils of life, there are few which are as painful as boredom, and consequently every attempt is made to avoid it.

from The Sane Society by Erich Fromm, 1955.

GUIDED SUMMARY COMPLETION

Fill in the blank spaces according to the meaning of the text.

Although people usually think of happiness as 1) _____ , or the opposite of 2) _____ , Fromm believes that happiness is 3) _____ or the opposite of 4) _____ .

KEY

1. fun or pleasure
2. depression
3. the feeling of being alive
4. sadness or sorrow